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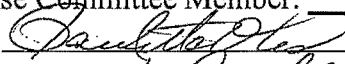
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: US ARMY EVALUATIONS, A STUDY OF INACCURATE AND INFLATED REPORTING

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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AY 11-12

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: A Study of United States Army evaluations.

Author: Major Scott R. Johnson, USA, CG #8

Thesis: Army evaluations have become inflated and have become an ineffective measure of performance and potential for continued service.

Discussion: I conducted a review of army evaluations and how they relate to the changes the army has experienced over the last decade in response to the War on Terror. These changes have created tremendous growth to counter the need for more "boots on the ground" for longer durations. In response to this growth, and the growing demands on the individual leader, army evaluations have become over inflated in response to increasing demands for promotions. This inflation of evaluations has made them ineffective measures for potential for continued promotion and increased responsibility in the army.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, the current army evaluations leave too much room for inflated comments that do not inform centralized promotion boards with reliable and accurate information in determining potential for increased responsibility. The current evaluations should be revised to remove the abundance of inflated reports.

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Preface

Today, given the United States' current conflict in Afghanistan and recent conflict in Iraq, the Army responded to demands to grow in size and structure in order to meet the demands for an enduring presence on the ground or "boots on the ground" in both theaters.

Throughout my research, I show that this sudden growth in the Army caused the current evaluation system to become overinflated, providing inaccurate evaluations of the individual leaders. I performed several interviews with Army Leaders, both Officer and Noncommissioned Officer in order to show from the leadership level, the demands placed on evaluations and their direct link to promotions. My research will show that guidelines for promotions have caused Leaders to inflated evaluations to meet these stringent promotion guidelines.

I would like to express my gratitude and acknowledge COL Andrew Poppas, COL Randy Harris, CSM Kevin Benson, and MSG Jonathan Martinez for their time and effort provided through interviews. I would like to acknowledge the leadership and mentorship that LtCol Shawn P. Callahan, US Marine Corps, provided me throughout the academic year. I also would like to acknowledge Dr. E.J. Erickson, LTC, US Army Retired, for his mentorship throughout the MMS process.

ARMY EVALUATION FORMS

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno said he believes "multidimensional feedback is an important component to holistic leader development."[1]

-- GEN. Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army

Army evaluations have been used to evaluate both officer and noncommissioned officers for many years. These evaluations have gone through many revisions over the years in order to more accurately record the performance and potential for Army leaders. The pursuit for accurate reporting has been forefront of the Army in both the past and present. Listed below is a brief background of the two evaluation forms to provide a general understanding of the forms and how they differ between officers and noncommissioned officers.

The Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER) has been used since the 1970s. Since its inception, the NCOER has undergone numerous changes to accurately report the performance and potential for Noncommissioned Officers (NCO). The most current version of the NCOER, October 2011, has gone virtually unchanged since the post Vietnam era.[2] The most notable changes were to make the form digital for ease of writing and submitting evaluations to the Department of the Army (DA).

In the current configuration, the NCOER has sections for a rater, senior rater, and a reviewer. The front of the form lists the administrative data, then goes on to list the principal duty title and military occupation skill (MOS) and the duty description of the rated NCO. Below the duty description, the Rater lists any areas of special emphasis and appointed duties such as key control, master gunner, etc. At the bottom of the front page, a list of army values are listed that

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[1] Michelle Tan, "Evals Latest Move to Root Out Toxic Leaders", Army Times, 09 October, 2011.
[2] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Reporting System*. AR 623-205. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. May 15, 2002.

are checked by the rater with a "yes" or "no". Below that, the rater can provide up to four bullet comments to support his view of the rated NCO as it pertains to army values. On the back, the rater provides bullet comments in five different sections; competence, physical fitness and military bearing, leadership, training, and responsibility and accountability. Within these sections, the rater provides a block check of "excellence", "success", or "needs improvement". The Rater then provides a final block check "among the best", "fully capable", or "marginal" before delivering the report to the Senior Rater.

The senior rater is the second line rating official. The senior rater must be in the direct line of supervision of the rated NCO and senior to the rater by either pay grade or date of rank. The Senior Raters primary role is that of evaluation, focusing on potential, responsible for over-watching the performance evaluation, and mentoring. The senior rater also obtains the rated NCO's signature once the evaluation has been completed. The Senior Rater provides bulletized comments with relation to performance, potential, promotion, and continued schooling (both civilian and military). "The Senior Rater uses his or her position and experience to evaluate the rated NCO from a broad organizational perspective. His or her evaluation is the link between the day-to-day observation of the rated NCO's performance by the rater and the longer-term evaluation of the rated NCO's potential by DA selection boards."[3]

The final portion of the NCOER is the Reviewing Officials examination of the evaluation. The reviewer is the third line rating official, and must be a commissioned officer, warrant officer, command sergeant major, or sergeant major in the direct line of supervision and senior in pay grade, grade of rank, or date of rank to the senior rater.[2] The reviewer examines the evaluation rendered by the rater and senior rater to ensure their comments (bullets) are clear, consistent,

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[3] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Reporting System.* AR 623-205. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. May 15, 2002.

just, and in accordance with known facts. The reviewer takes special care to ensure the specific bullet comments support the appropriate excellence, success, or needs improvement ratings.[2] Once the reviewer has reviewed the evaluation in its entirety, and approves of the ratings, the reviewer will check the "concur" or "nonconcur" block, then place his (or her) signature on the front of the form after the form has been signed first by the rater, then the senior rater.

The current Officer Evaluation Report (OER) has been used since the 1980s with only a few minor modifications having to do with Senior Rater profiles. The OER is used by the chain of command (rating chain) to provide Department of the Army with performance and potential assessments of each rated officer (both commissioned and warrant).[4] The OER also provides evaluation information for use by successive members of the rating chain and emphasizes and reinforces professionalism, and supports the specialty focus of the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS).

On the front of the OER, similar to the NCOER, is the administrative data. The rating chain is listed in sequence, rater, intermediate rater, and senior rater. The principle duty title and significant duties and responsibilities outline the rated officer's primary job description. Listed next are the army values with "yes" and "no" block checks. Just below is the leader attributes/skills/actions section where the rater is required to select "yes" or "no" and select six of these attributes that best define the rated officer.

The Rater completes section four on the back of the form. This section provides for the rater's evaluation of the rated officer's performance and potential. The rater compares the rated officer's performance and potential for promotion with that of his or her contemporaries or peers. The raters focus is on results achieved and the manner by which they were achieved.[3] The rater

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[4] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Officer Evaluation Reporting System*. AR 623-105. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. April 1, 1998.

selects from "outstanding performance, must promote", "satisfactory performance, promote", "unsatisfactory performance, do no promote", or "other". The other block is typically used in the case of senior officers that work well at their current level and should be retained but do not necessarily show the potential for promotion to the next grade, or for officers in the grade of CW5. Also in section four, the rater comments on specific aspects of performance and potential. These comments are mandatory. As a minimum, the comments should address the key items mentioned in the duty description on the front of the form and objectives and contributions portions of the OER support form. Evaluation of potential consists of an assessment of the rated officer's ability to perform in positions of greater responsibility. Comments should be specific and address, as appropriate, the officer's potential for promotion, military and civilian schooling, specific assignment, and potential for command.[5] The rater will provide narrative comments indicating any unique skills/expertise which the rated officer possesses in section five. The rater should focus on identifying any ability of special value to the army which may not be evident in other areas of an officer's personnel file. This may include a detailed understanding of a particular technological application or expertise the rated officer possesses or an in depth understanding of a foreign culture. Finally, the rater will enter a recommended career field for all army competitive category captains (this allows senior raters to recommend job fields for captains that have not already been selected for promotion).

Section seven of the OER provides for the senior rater's evaluation of the rated officer's performance and potential and is intended to capitalize on the senior rater's additional experience, broad organizational perspective, and tendency to focus on the organizational requirements and actual performance results. To assist the senior rater, an OER support form is

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[5] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Officer Evaluation Reporting System.* AR 623-105. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. April 1, 1998.

used and is intended to supplement more traditional means such as personal observation, reports and records, etc.[4] In evaluating the whole officer, the senior rater may consider the fact that an officer is in a zone of consideration for promotion, command, or school selection. The senior rater's evaluation is made by comparing the rated officer's performance and potential with all other officers of the same grade the senior rater has rated or will rate. Based on the rated officer's duty performance, the senior rater assesses the rated officer's potential to perform duties and responsibilities at the next higher grade, compared with all other officers of the same grade and then selects "best qualified", "fully qualified", "do not promote", or "other". The "Other" box is for cases that do not fit the promotion recommendations that are given, for CW5s. The senior rater enters the total number of officers he currently senior rates in that grade. This information helps DA selection boards identify senior raters with small rating populations and help to weigh the report accordingly. Finally, the senior rater makes an assessment of the rated officer's overall potential in comparison with all other officers of the same grade the senior rater has senior rated or has currently in his or he senior rater population.[6] This potential is evaluated in terms of the majority of officers in the population. The senior rater may select "above center of mass", "center of mass", "below center of mass retain", or "below center of mass do not retain". In an effort to maintain a credible profile, the senior rater must have less than 50% of the ratings of a grade in the "above center of mass". The senior rater enters narrative comments that focus on the rated officer's potential and future assignments but may also address performance, or the evaluations of the rater and intermediate rater.[5] Based on the rated officer's duty performance and demonstrated potential, the Senior Rater will list three future assignments, focusing on the next three to five years for which the rated officer is best suited. The senior rater is overall

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[6] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Officer Evaluation Reporting System.* AR 623-105. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. April 1, 1998.

responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the OER, and is responsible for obtaining the rated officers signature.

THE CENTRALIZED PROMOTION SYSTEM

" Plenty of men can do good work for a spurt and with immediate promotion in mind, but for promotion you want a man in whom good work has become a habit. "

--Henry L. Doherty

The purpose of this section is to provide an understanding of the Army promotion system. The Army promotion system is very evaluation driven. Evaluations play a crucial role not only as a tool for promotion board members in the selection process, but can also create disparity across the spectrum for service members that are being reviewed for promotion. This section provides clarity on how the Army promotion system works and the effect of accurate evaluations on the promotion process.

Army promotions can be separated into three categories, centralized (DA), semi-centralized (unit level, E-5 and E-6), and decentralized (E-2 – E-4). For the purposes of this research, only centralized promotions will be discussed. The centralized promotion system applies to senior NCOs (E-7 – E-9), commissioned officers (O-3 – O-8), and warrant officers (CW3 – CW5). The process for each is virtually the same. The purpose of the centralized promotion system is to

evaluate each NCO or officer based on past performance and potential for continued service in the next higher grade. Each NCO or officer is compared with the rest of his peer group (year group) based on his or her own merit. The convening board members are briefed on the number of available promotions and the threshold for scoring each individual. The information available to the board members for scoring purposes is the individual NCO or officer's official military personnel file (OMPF). There is no face to face contact with board members and the individual being considered for promotion. This is generally (very simplified) how the process works.

The centralized promotion system has been in effect for promotion of enlisted soldiers since 1 January 1969 for sergeants major, 1 March 1969 for master sergeant, and 1 June 1970 for sergeant first class.[7] Each NCO must meet certain eligibility requirements in order to be considered for promotion. Soldiers must meet the announced date of rank (DOR) and basic active service date (BASD) requirements and other eligibility criteria prescribed by the Human Resource Command (HRC). The NCO must have at least years of service for sergeant first class (E-7), eight years of service for master sergeant (E-8), and ten years of total active federal service (AFS) to be considered for promotion.[6] The enlisted centralized promotion board is composed of at least five members. The board may be divided into two or more panels. Each panel will be composed of at least three voting members, including commissioned officers and senior NCOs. The president of each board will be a general officer. An officer will be appointed to each board to serve as a recorder without a vote. Female and minority members will be represented, if available. The selection board will recommend a specified number of soldiers by MOS from the zones of consideration who are the best qualified to meet the needs of the army.

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[7] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Enlisted Promotions and Reductions*. AR 600-8-19. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. April 30, 2010.

The total number selected for each MOS is the projected number the army needs to maintain its authorized-by-grade strength. Soldiers who are not selected for promotion will not be provided specific reasons for non-selection. Soldiers may consult the statistical analysis portion of the promotion list or they may write to the career professional development NCO of their respective branch for an analysis on how to enhance their careers and make themselves more competitive for promotion. No soldier may appear in person before a DA selection board on his or her own behalf, or in the interest of anyone being considered. Soldiers eligible for promotion consideration may write to the president of the promotion board to provide documents and information drawing attention to any matter concerning themselves that they feel is important to their consideration. Although written communication is authorized, it is only encouraged when there is something that is not provided in the soldier's records (OMPF) that the soldier feels will have an impact on the board's decision.[8]

The Secretary of the Army (SA) has the authority to convene selection boards to recommend officers for promotion to the next higher grade. These boards will select commissioned officers for promotion to captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general, and major general, and warrant officers (WOs) for promotion to chief warrant officer 3, chief warrant officer 4, and chief warrant officer 5. A separate selection board will convene for each competitive category and grade for commissioned officers, however, each board may be convened concurrently. The SA may establish competitive categories for promotion. Officers in the same competitive category compete among themselves for promotion. The Deputy Chief of Staff (DCS), G-1, with the approval of the SA, will publish a standing operating procedure

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[8] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Enlisted Promotions and Reductions*. AR 600-8-19. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. April 30, 2010.

(SOP) to govern the administrative support for selection boards. "The SA, or the Secretary's designee, will conduct, at random, yearly interviews of board presidents, members, recorders, or administrative support staff to ensure that boards are being conducted according to applicable law, regulations, and guidelines."[9] Interviews are conducted for those boards considering officers for promotion to grades major through major general. The SA will review annually the content of administrative briefings provided to the selection board members to ensure that they do not alter the substantive guidance provided. Promotion selection boards will consist of at least five officers on the army active duty list (ADL). The SA will appoint one member of the selection board as president and will prescribe administrative duties for that officer to perform. A board president has no authority to constrain the board from recommending an officer for promotion who is fully qualified that the majority of the board members find best qualified to meet the needs of the army.[10] Each board member must be a major or above. Each board will include at least one officer from the competitive category under consideration. If no eligible officer is available from that category, the SA can appoint a retired officer from that competitive category to the board. No officer can serve on two successive selection boards for the same grade and competitive category. Selection boards considering commissioned officers who are serving in, or have served in, joint duty assignments require at least one officer, designated by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is currently serving in a joint duty assignment. For warrant officer selection boards, the SA may appoint warrant officers senior in grade to those under consideration as members of the board as long as one member is from the category being considered. "The DCS, G-1 will designate officers to serve as recorders for selection boards."[9]

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[9] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Officer Promotions*. AR 600-8-29. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. February 35, 2005.
[10] Headquarters Department of the Army. *Officer Promotions*. AR 600-8-29. Washington D.C. Headquarters Department of the Army. February 35, 2005.

At least one board recorder must be present during all board deliberations. Officers designated as board recorders must have completed in the previous 12 months a program of instruction approved by the SA including the duties and responsibilities of recorders. No officer can serve as a board member and a board recorder for the same selection board.

The Army centralized promotion system is a very detailed system. This section serves as a basic overview of the detailed process for the promotion selection of senior officers and noncommissioned officers. The Army has put a great deal of effort in creating an environment for board members to review potential candidates for promotion in an impartial setting. Evaluations are the most important factor in this process. Inflated evaluations do not provide board members with accurate information and can skew selection criteria for other potential candidates.

HISTORY OF INFLATION

The U.S. Army evaluation system is the product of decades of research and development with multiple revisions. The importance of the report in managing critical selection decisions such as promotions directly impacting the careers of tens of thousands of the Army's leaders, both officer and NCO, has few equals in the private sector based upon its size, complexity, and application. It is not the intent of this study to review the entire history of the Army evaluation system, rather to review the history of inflation in Army evaluations and the Army's attempt to curb inflation.

It is important to understand the current report format in relation to the formats utilized in the past. Each report a leader receives is intended to provide useful information to a Department of Army centralized promotion board. The evaluation is in fact used as a message to communicate to the board members a recommendation of the performance and potential of the evaluated officer or NCO. Furthermore, the information placed in the report becomes the basis for making personnel management decisions on every aspect of a leader's career to include promotion, assignments, selection for advanced schooling, and retention on active duty.[11] The current OER and NCOER has received over fifteen revisions since World War I.[12] These revisions have been made to decrease the inflation and inaccurate information being provided to promotion board members. The purpose of these revisions has been to provide more useful, accurate, and equitable performance ratings throughout the Army.[13] Many of the revisions were caused by the inability of selection boards to discern a quantifiable difference in reports due to rating inflation.[14] Rating inflation occurs when an inordinately large population of officers are placed at the high end of a rating scale.[15] The control of inflation has been the major goal of revisions to Army evaluations in the past twenty-five years.[16] As an additional measure against inflation of OERs and NCOERs, the US Army Human Resources Command "HRC" keeps senior raters accountable by routinely informing them about their rating history and by keeping a profile of that history that is seen by selection boards.[17] The Army has also implemented a new box-check policy change that will apply to all OERs directed by George Piccirilli, chief of the evaluation,

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[11] Straffon, Nick. "Promotion Boards." *Army Reserve Magazine* (Winter, 1997): 18.

[12] Army Times, October 9, 2011

[13] US Army, All Army Activity Message 26_91

[14] United States Total Army Personnel Command. *The New OER Briefing.* 1 October 1997, n.p. On-line. Internet, 2 January 1998. Available from http://wwwperscom.army.mil/tagd/oers/brief/brief.htm.

[15] Hardy, Allan C. and Keith B. Harker. *U.S. Army Officer Perceptions of the New OER.* Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December, 1982.

[16] US Army, Military Personnel Message 07-072

[17] Army Times, October 1, 2011

selection and promotion division of HRC's Adjutant General Directorate.[18] The box-check also

will provide additional information to selection boards at a time when the Army will be getting

smaller and captain and major promotion selection rates are expected to drop from the high

levels of the past 10 years.[18] Lieutenant General Bostick, the Army G1, said the new system is

more realistic and lessens the occurrence of inflated comments.[18] Further efforts to rid the Army

evaluation system of inflation have been made to replace the current Army evaluations with

forms that "incorporate current doctrine, increase rater accountability, further stratify the senior

rater profile technique, and include an interactive leader development tool in an effort to

decrease evaluation inflation," Secretary of Army McHugh directed in his Sept. 15 implementing

instructions.[18]

Previous versions of the Army's evaluations have attempted to decrease inflation such as in

1979 the Army released a new OER designed to provide information from the officer's rating

chain that could be used to execute Department of the Army centralized personnel decisions. The

notable difference in the release of this form as opposed to the numerous previous forms was the

advertised emphasis on the report providing accurate and useful performance evaluation data and

to decrease the occurrence of inflated evaluations to a centralized personnel promotion board.[19]

This emphasis was different from previous editions that had placed the greatest weight on

providing feedback to the rated officer. This feedback function of previous editions conflicted

greatly with the needs of the Army's centralized promotion boards for objective evaluation

data.[19] Although the evaluation report's most important function in terms of impact on the rated

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[18] Army Times, October 9, 2011

[19] United States Total Army Personnel Command. *The New OER Briefing.* 1 October 1997, n.p. On-line. Internet, 2
January 1998. Available from http://wwwperscom.army.mil/tagd/oers/brief/brief.htm.

officer has always been the selection process this was the first time the Army overtly designed the form with centralized personnel management as the primary purpose.

One of the early evaluation forms 67-8, lasted over eighteen years, twelve years longer than the previous version, because it was designed to provide the proper information to its primary user, centralized selection boards.[20] Additionally, its successor, Form 67-9, contains only minor changes. The only significant change on Form 67-9 was not to the rating method, but only in how the senior rater manages his profile. The senior rater's ranking block was only modified in how it is used. The new Form 67-9 holds the senior rater accountable for his/her ratings. The success of the forced distribution rating system is clearly demonstrated by its long-term use. However, the Army continues to include a narrative evaluation in the OER that covers seventy-five percent of the form. Evidence from the analysis of selection board results indicates that the narrative evaluation sections of the OER are of little use to the boards and encourage inflated comments on performance and potential.[20] Additionally, the report contains only one objective measure of the rated individual that can be used by a selection board as a discriminator, the senior rater block check. As the single discriminator on the OER, it may carry more weight than intended.

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[20] United States Total Army Personnel Command. *PERSCOM Update, Fiscal Year 1997*, 11.

ANALYSIS

"Accuracy is the twin brother of honesty; inaccuracy, of dishonesty."

--Nathaniel Hawthorne

The NCOER form itself is not to blame for the inflation of NCO evaluations. The current evaluations have evolved to make it very difficult for board members to separate those records appearing before a centralized board. It is not the fault of the NCOER itself but the raters and senior raters writing the reports that are not ensuring that high ratings are quantified with quantitative comments as required by army regulation. A potential downfall of the form itself is that there is only one area for the senior rater to portray future potential. There is nowhere for the rater to express his or her feelings with reference to the rated NCOs future potential. In fact, by army regulation, only one bullet is required on the entire form to mention potential. Since the army selects NCOs based on their performance and potential to serve at positions of increased responsibility, it would make sense that both rater and senior rater would have the opportunity to expand on this area of emphasis.

There has been much debate over the functionality of the form itself and the bullet style comments. Some would argue the NCOER should be similar to the OER with paragraph style comments by both rater and senior rater. This has shown mixed feelings throughout the Army. In some situations, NCOs whose rater and senior rater posses better writing skills would have an advantage over their peers that have less experienced writers.[21] In this situation, an NCO with

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[21] Kevin R. Benson, Command Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major Training Command Fort Jackson.

less future potential could be selected for promotion at a centralized army promotion board over an NCO that has and will perform a lot better, but happened to have less literate rating chain.[22]

Another potential flaw with the NCOER is that no one is held accountable for numerical ratings. Unlike the OER, the NCOER does not require the senior rater to hold a senior rater profile in which the senior rater must track his or her ratings as it applies to his or her rated community. This way the rated NCO can be compared with his or her peers within that command. There is also no accountability to rank ordering, so every NCO within a certain rank, in the same command can potentially be rated in the top ten percent for example.

Another potential flaw with the NCOER is unclear definitions of the levels of performance. Currently, the form allows the rater and senior rater to select from either excellence, success, needs improvement (some), or needs improvement (much). These should be redefined or redesigned to read; superior, excellence, capable, needs improvement.[21]

Another possible cause for the inflation of NCO evaluations is due in part to "exasperated loyalty, especially in our less mature raters and senior raters."[21] "This becomes especially evident in units deployed to or just returning from a combat rotation. I call this Combat Loyalty."[23] "The army has taken away gates of performance that create automatic "excellence" or in my concept "superior" ratings. Really the only current automatic is the APFT (army physical fitness test) which I agree should remain as it is a measurable event."[24] The army no longer has system technical tests "STT" or skills qualification testing "SQT" that helped to clearly measure performance for NCOs at every level. Without this testing, there is no real measure or scalability outlined by the army for raters and senior raters to follow. Clearly

[22] Jonathan R. Martinez, Master Sergeant, NCOIC Human Resources DIA.
[23] Andrew P. Poppas, Colonel, US Army, Harvard Fellow.
[24] Kevin R. Benson, Command Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major Training Command Fort Jackson.

defining measures of performance would take away the guessing game for raters and senior raters and would decrease the disparity between commands.

Another area that can potentially cause inaccuracies is that there is no requirement by regulation for a senior NCO to be in the rating chain. Senior NCOs have a vast amount of experience with NCOERs and can ensure quality assurance/quality control is conducted. This can be tremendously helpful when deciphering additional duties and ensuring those additional duties are addressed and subsequently rolled up in the report, both good and bad.[25]

Officer evaluations have become inflated for various reasons. The form itself generally lends itself to accurate evaluation of the rated officer. One potential shortfall to the OER is that it is susceptible to a subtle nuance of key words that promotion board members can key in on. This is a major drawback to the paragraph style of the OER.[26] With the paragraph style, some say it is just filling space versus short concise bullet statements that do not lend themselves to subtleties. With this format, raters and senior raters have the ability to use subtle writing styles to clew promotion board members in on potential poor performers without having to directly address poor performance.

The wording in OERs is expected (by army regulation) to be justified with quantitative comments coupled with an enumeration. Some raters or senior raters will "side step" using enumeration and just rate performance with terms such as "phenomenal" or "outstanding" without ranking the rated officer against his or her peers.[27] Evaluations should clearly signify the worst performers along with the mediocre as well as the best. The paragraph format provides ample room for the rater and senior rater to expand in detail the performance and potential of the rated officer.

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[25] Kevin R. Benson, Command Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major Training Command Fort Jackson.
[26] Andrew P. Poppas, Colonel, US Army, Harvard Fellow.
[27] Randall L. Harris, Colonel, US Army, Deputy Commander Ops Group JRTC.

Another somewhat contentious topic within the OER is the senior rater's profile. The current OER requires all senior raters of CW3, CW4, MAJ, LTC, COL, and BG to maintain a senior rater profile. This profile tracks how many rated officers within each rank have been rated as above center of mass, center of mass, below center of mass retain, and below center of mass do not retain. The senior rater is limited to giving forty-nine percent of his officers in each grade an above center of mass. This keeps the rating honest, however, the written rating does not always justify the above center of mass. In the past, captains were included in the senior rater profile. It was thought that by ratings captains this way, it could limit future assignments or selections such as battalion command or brigade command.[28] With the drawdown of forces, the army needs to be able to distinguish who the best performers are.[29] The senior rater profile is one such way of identifying the top performers. Arguably this is tough to do, and can have consequences with loyalties within the command.

Within the OER, there is currently no system to track rank ordering. This is important in identifying the top performing officers within the command. Currently, there is nothing stopping a senior rater from potentially rating every officer he rates in the top ten percent. It is impossible for everyone to be in the top ten percent of officers that particular senior rater rates. There is a perception that if you are rated below the top fifteen percent, that this could potentially keep an officer from being selected for promotion. The potential short fall to keeping accountability of rank ordering is a small rating pool. This doesn't provide proper perspective as compared to a larger rating pool.[27] The worst in one rating pool might be much better than a sister units best.[27] For this reason, rank ordering should be clearly defined in the regulation to eliminate such disparity between commands. "If an officer is in the top 50 percent, you are competing against a

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[28] Andrew P. Poppas, Colonel, US Army, Harvard Fellow.

[29] Randall L. Harris, Colonel, US Army, Deputy Commander Ops Group JRTC.

pool of talent and this is a success threshold. Excellence should be held for the top ten percent."[30]

The inflation of OERs effects promotions and can be seen when leaders who want to take care of their own and want to ensure those working hard for them and doing well continue on in the military by inflating or embellishing evaluations.[29] With the reduction of formations (both soldiers and units), increasing the competitiveness of promotions, this can cause inflation to occur more often.[31] "It is the nature of the beast; leaders wanting to ensure their subordinates, who are competent, committed, and performed well, are promoted and continue on."[29] "Poor performers are easy and should be removed but that pool is the exception."[32] Inflation can be attributed to loyalty, first to the institution to ensure policing of our ranks to maintain the best, but also to your subordinates who have worked hard, met the requirements, and usually did more than was asked. Most raters and senior raters feel a responsibility to ensure top performers are recognized and can progress to meet their full potential.[29] This can potentially have a negative effect on army promotions by creating inaccuracies between different commands. This can skew selection criteria for the promotion board members and cause inequality in the promotion of both NCOs and officers.

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[30] Andrew P. Poppas, Colonel, US Army, Harvard Fellow.
[31] Randall L. Harris, Colonel, US Army, Deputy Commander Ops Group JRTC.
[32] Kevin R. Benson, Command Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major Training Command Fort Jackson.

CONCLUSIONS

Inflation of army evaluations is not a mono-causal effect and cannot be blamed on a singular problem. The current forms being used for NCOERs and OERs have a good foundation; however lend themselves to simple manipulation through wording by both raters and senior raters.[33] This can be minimized by clarifying and defining the criteria in the current army regulations. As it stands, the current regulations leave room for the use of ambiguous terms and comments. One way to solve this problem is to combine the current NCOER and OER formats and utilize short concise bullet type comments. This will minimize the use of ambiguous wording and will force raters and senior raters to justify ratings. Using the same form for both NCOs and officers will evaluate them along the same standards that are already required of professional soldiers and leaders in the army.

Another change that would be effective in minimizing inflation is to add a section that allows the rater to comment on the rated NCO or officers additional duties. Many times NCOs and officers work extensively along the lines of additional duties and do not receive an evaluation of their performance of those duties. This would also better portray the rated NCO or officer's performance of duty to promotion board members and aid in the fairness in the promotion selection process.

By changing and redefining success and creating new gates of performance, a more accurate picture of the rated NCO or officer can be portrayed. Redefining the term success and assigning percentages that correlate with certain gates of performance will create a standard across the army and alleviate discrepancies from one command to another. The block checks for both the rater and senior rater on the back of the current NCOER and OER should be changed to

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[33] Jonathan R. Martinez, Master Sergeant, NCOIC Human Resources DIA.

"superior", "excellence", "success", and "needs improvement".[34] Each of these should be assigned a numerical percentage; superior equals top ten percent, excellence equals top twenty-five percent, success equals top fifty percent, and needs improvement equals below fifty percent. The "superior" block should cause an automatic "above center of mass" block check for the senior rater profile (for those evaluations that require a senior rater profile). The additional three blocks do not need to be linked, as they do not need to be tracked. By making these changes and tracking "superior" and "above center of mass" selections, this will force raters and senior raters to more accurately rate their NCOs and officers and will hold them accountable for the ratings they give. This will also lessen disparity between separate commands throughout the Army and aid promotion board members in promotion selections.

The current senior rater profile should be changed to include not only captains, but master sergeants, sergeants major, and command sergeants major. By creating senior rater profiles for these senior NCOs and captains, this creates a standard to compare soldiers with peers and creates equality across the army by comparing these NCOs and officers with others in the same grade. This also acts as a forcing function in holding raters and senior raters accountable for the ratings they provide. This creates more work for senior raters in tracking these ratings, but will greatly increase and standardize ratings throughout the army. This change would decrease disparity for promotion board members as they compare peer groups for promotion selection.

Standardizing the NCOER and OER by evaluating both NCOs and officers along the same evaluation criteria using bulletized comments similar to the existing NCOER will greatly reduce inflation of army evaluations. By doing so, this reduces the ability to provide long written, ambiguous evaluations and forces short, concise, critical evaluations. This will dramatically increase the accuracy of army evaluations. Holding raters and senior raters accountable for the

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[34] Kevin R. Benson, Command Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major Training Command Fort Jackson.

ratings they provide NCOs and officers, will also significantly decrease disparity in evaluations across the Army and aid in truly selecting qualified professionals for promotion.

NCO EVALUATION REPORT

For use of this form, see AR 623-3 ; the proponent agency is DCS, G-1.

PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. SSN	c. RANK ( )	d. DATE OF RANK	e. PMOSC

f.1. UNIT ORG. STATION ZIP CODE OR APO, MAJOR COMMAND	f.2. STATUS CODE	g. REASON FOR SUBMISSION

h. PERIOD COVERED		i. RATED MONTHS	j. NON-RATED CODES	k. NO. OF ENCL	l. RATED NCO'S EMAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)	m. UIC	n. CMD CODE	o. PSB CODE
FROM	THRU							
YEAR MONTH DAY	YEAR MONTH DAY							

PART II - AUTHENTICATION

a. NAME OF RATER (Last, First, Middle Initial)	SSN	SIGNATURE	DATE (YYYYMMDD)

RANK	PMOSC/BRANCH	ORGANIZATION	DUTY ASSIGNMENT	RATER'S AKO EMAIL ADDRESS (.gov. or .mil)

b. NAME OF SENIOR RATER (Last, First, Middle Initial)	SSN	SIGNATURE	DATE (YYYYMMDD)

RANK	PMOSC/BRANCH	ORGANIZATION	DUTY ASSIGNMENT	SENIOR RATER'S AKO EMAIL ADDRESS (.gov. or .mil)

c. NAME OF REVIEWER (Last, First, Middle Initial)	SSN	SIGNATURE	DATE (YYYYMMDD)

RANK	PMOSC/BRANCH	ORGANIZATION	DUTY ASSIGNMENT	REVIEWER'S AKO EMAIL ADDRESS (.gov. or .mil)

d. ☐ CONCUR WITH RATER AND SENIOR RATER EVALUATIONS   ☐ NONCONCUR WITH RATER AND/OR SENIOR RATER EVAL .(See attached comments)

e. RATED NCO: I understand my signature does not constitute agreement or disagreement with the evaluations of the rater and senior rater. I further understand my signature verifies that the administrative data in Part I, the rating officials in Part II, the duty description to include the counseling dates in Part III, and the APFT and height/weight entries in Part IVc are correct. I have seen the completed report. I am aware of the appeals process of AR 623-3.

SIGNATURE   DATE (YYYYMMDD)

PART III - DUTY DESCRIPTION (Rater)

a. PRINCIPAL DUTY TITLE	b. DUTY MOSC

c. DAILY DUTIES AND SCOPE (To include, as appropriate, people, equipment, facilities and dollars)

d. AREAS OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS

e. APPOINTED DUTIES

f. COUNSELING DATES	INITIAL	LATER	LATER	LATER

PART IV - ARMY VALUES/ATTRIBUTES/SKILLS/ACTIONS (Rater)

a. ARMY VALUES. Check either "YES" or "NO".   (Bullet Comments are mandatory. Substantive bullet comments are required for "NO" entries.)

	YES	NO
1. LOYALTY: Bears true faith and allegiance to the U. S. Constitution, the Army, the unit, and other Soldiers.		
2. DUTY: Fulfills their obligations.		
3. RESPECT/EO/EEO: Treats people as they should be treated.		
4. SELFLESS-SERVICE: Puts the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates before their own.		
5. HONOR: Lives up to all the Army values.		
6. INTEGRITY: Does what is right - legally and morally.		
7. PERSONAL COURAGE: Faces fear, danger, or adversity (physical and moral).		

V A L U E S
Loyalty
Duty
Respect
Selfless-Service
Honor
Integrity
Personal Courage

Bullet comments

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RATED NCO'S NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	SSN	THRU DATE

PART IV (Rater) - VALUES/NCO RESPONSIBILITIES

Bullet comments are mandatory.
Substantive bullet comments are required for "EXCELLENCE" or "NEEDS IMPROVEMENT."

b. COMPETENCE
- o Duty proficiency; MOS competency
- o Technical & tactical; knowledge, skills, and abilities
- o Sound judgment
- o Seeking self-improvement; always learning
- o Accomplishing tasks to the fullest capacity; committed to excellence

EXCELLENCE (Exceeds std)	SUCCESS (Meets std)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Some)	(Much)
☐	☐	☐	☐

c. PHYSICAL FITNESS & MILITARY BEARING   APFT   HEIGHT/WEIGHT   /
- o Mental and physical toughness
- o Endurance and stamina to go the distance
- o Displaying confidence and enthusiasm; looks like a Soldier

EXCELLENCE (Exceeds std)	SUCCESS (Meets std)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Some)	(Much)
☐	☐	☐	☐

d. LEADERSHIP
- o Mission first
- o Genuine concern for Soldiers
- o Instilling the spirit to achieve and win
- o Setting the example; Be, Know, Do

EXCELLENCE (Exceeds std)	SUCCESS (Meets std)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Some)	(Much)
☐	☐	☐	☐

e. TRAINING
- o Individual and team
- o Mission focused; performance oriented
- o Teaching Soldiers how; common tasks, duty-related skills
- o Sharing knowledge and experience to fight, survive and win

EXCELLENCE (Exceeds std)	SUCCESS (Meets std)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Some)	(Much)
☐	☐	☐	☐

f. RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY
- o Care and maintenance of equipment/facilities
- o Soldier and equipment safety
- o Conservation of supplies and funds
- o Encouraging Soldiers to learn and grow
- o Responsible for good, bad, right & wrong

EXCELLENCE (Exceeds std)	SUCCESS (Meets std)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Some)	(Much)
☐	☐	☐	☐

PART V - OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL

a. RATER. Overall potential for promotion and/or service in positions of greater responsibility.

AMONG THE BEST	FULLY CAPABLE	MARGINAL
☐	☐	☐

b. RATER. List 3 positions in which the rated NCO could best serve the Army at his/her current or next higher grade.

e. SENIOR RATER BULLET COMMENTS

c. SENIOR RATER. Overall performance

1	2	3	4	5
Successful			Fair	Poor

d. SENIOR RATER. Overall potential for promotion and/or service in positions of greater responsibility.

1	2	3	4	5
Superior			Fair	Poor

OFFICER EVALUATION REPORT
For use of this form, see AR 623-3 the proponent agency is DCS, G-1.

PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. SSN	c. RANK	d. DATE OF RANK (YYYYMMDD)	e. BRANCH	f. DESIGNATED SPECIALTIES / PMOS (WO)

g.1. UNIT, ORG., STATION, ZIP CODE, OR APO, MAJOR COMMAND	g.2. STATUS CODE	h. REASON FOR SUBMISSION

i. PERIOD COVERED		j. RATED MONTHS	k. NONRATED CODES	l. NO. OF ENCL	m. RATED OFFICER'S AKO EMAIL ADDRESS (.gov or mil)	n. UIC	o. CMD CODE	p. PSB CODE
FROM (YYYYMMDD)	THRU (YYYYMMDD)			0				

PART II - AUTHENTICATION (Rated officer's signature verifies officer has seen completed OER Parts I-VII and the admin data is correct)

a. NAME OF RATER (Last, First, MI)	SSN	RANK	POSITION	SIGNATURE	DATE (YYYYMMDD)

b. NAME OF INTERMEDIATE RATER (Last, First, MI)	SSN	RANK	POSITION	SIGNATURE	DATE (YYYYMMDD)

c. NAME OF SENIOR RATER (Last, First, MI)	SSN	RANK	POSITION	SIGNATURE	DATE (YYYYMMDD)

SENIOR RATER'S ORGANIZATION	BRANCH	SENIOR RATER TELEPHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)

d. This is a referred report, do you wish to make comments?. ☐ Yes, comments are attached ☐ No

e. SIGNATURE OF RATED OFFICER	DATE (YYYYMMDD)

PART III - DUTY DESCRIPTION

a. PRINCIPAL DUTY TITLE	b. POSITION AOC/BR

c. SIGNIFICANT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. REFER TO PART IVa, DA FORM 67-9-1.

PART IV - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - PROFESSIONALISM (Rater)

CHARACTER *Disposition of the leader: combination of values, attributes, and skills affecting leader actions*

a. ARMY VALUES (Comments mandatory for all "NO" entries. Use PART Vb.)

	Yes	No			Yes	No
1. HONOR: Adherence to the Army's publicly declared code of values			5. RESPECT: Promotes dignity, consideration, fairness, & EO			
2. INTEGRITY: Possesses high personal moral standards; honest in word and deed			6. SELFLESS-SERVICE: Places Army priorities before self			
3. COURAGE: Manifests physical and moral bravery			7. DUTY: Fulfills professional, legal, and moral obligations			
4. LOYALTY: Bears true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, the unit, and the soldier						

b. LEADER ATTRIBUTES / SKILLS / ACTIONS: First, mark "YES" or "NO" for each block. Second, choose a total of six that best describe the rated officer. Select one from ATTRIBUTES, two from SKILLS (Competence), and three from ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP). Place an "X" in the appropriate numbered box with optional comments in PART Vb.
Comments are mandatory in Part Vb for all "NO" entries.

b.1. ATTRIBUTES (Select 1) Fundamental qualities and characteristics	1. MENTAL YES NO Possesses desire, will, initiative, and discipline	2. PHYSICAL YES NO Maintains appropriate level of physical fitness and military bearing	3. EMOTIONAL YES NO Displays self-control; calm under pressure
b.2 SKILLS (Competence) (Select 2) Skill development is part of self-development; prerequisite to action	1. CONCEPTUAL YES NO Demonstrates sound judgment, critical/creative thinking, moral reasoning	2. INTERPERSONAL YES NO Shows skill with people: coaching, teaching, counseling, motivating and empowering	3. TECHNICAL YES NO Possesses the necessary expertise to accomplish all tasks and functions
	4. TACTICAL Demonstrates proficiency in required professional knowledge, judgment, and warfighting YES NO		

b.3. ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP) (Select 3) Major activities leaders perform: influencing, operating, and improving

INFLUENCING Method of reaching goals while operating / improving	1. COMMUNICATING YES NO Displays good oral, written, and listening skills for individuals / groups	2. DECISION-MAKING YES NO Employs sound judgment, logical reasoning and uses resources wisely	3. MOTIVATING YES NO Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward mission accomplishment
OPERATING Short-term mission accomplishment	4. PLANNING YES NO Develops detailed, executable plans that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable	5. EXECUTING YES NO Shows tactical proficiency, meets mission standards, and takes care of people/resources	6. ASSESSING YES NO Uses after-action and evaluation tools to facilitate consistent improvement
IMPROVING Long-term improvement in the Army its people and organizations	7. DEVELOPING YES NO Invests adequate time and effort to develop individual subordinates as leaders	8. BUILDING YES NO Spends time and resources improving teams, groups and units; fosters ethical climate	9. LEARNING YES NO Seeks self-improvement and organizational growth; envisioning, adapting and leading change

c. APFT:	DATE:	HEIGHT:	WEIGHT:

d. OFFICER DEVELOPMENT - *MANDATORY YES OR NO ENTRY FOR RATERS OF CPTs, LTs, CW2s, AND WO1s.*
WERE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS RECORDED ON DA FORM 67-9-1a AND QUARTERLY FOLLOW-UP COUNSELINGS CONDUCTED?   ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NA

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NAME	SSN	PERIOD COVERED

PART V - PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL EVALUATION *(Rater)*

a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE RATING PERIOD AND HIS/HER POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION

☐ OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE, MUST PROMOTE   ☐ SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, PROMOTE   ☐ UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, DO NOT PROMOTE   ☐ OTHER *(Explain)*

b. COMMENT ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE, REFER TO PART III, DA FORM 67-9 AND PART IVa, b, AND PART Vb, DA FORM 67-9-1.

c. COMMENT ON POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION.

d. IDENTIFY ANY UNIQUE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OR AREAS OF EXPERTISE OF VALUE TO THE ARMY THAT THIS OFFICER POSSESSES. FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.

PART VI - INTERMEDIATE RATER

PART VII - SENIOR RATER

a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PROMOTION POTENTIAL TO THE NEXT HIGHER GRADE

I currently senior rate _____ officer(s) in this grade

A completed DA Form 67-9-1 was received with this report and considered in my evaluation and review ☐ YES ☐ NO *(Explain in c)*

☐ BEST QUALIFIED   ☐ FULLY QUALIFIED   ☐ DO NOT PROMOTE   ☐ OTHER *(Explain below)*

b. POTENTIAL COMPARED WITH OFFICERS SENIOR RATED IN SAME GRADE (OVERPRINTED BY DA)

☐ ABOVE CENTER OF MASS
(Less than 50% in top box; Center of Mass if 50% or more in top box)

☐ CENTER OF MASS

☐ BELOW CENTER OF MASS RETAIN

☐ BELOW CENTER OF MASS DO NOT RETAIN

c. COMMENT ON PERFORMANCE/POTENTIAL

d. LIST THREE FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH THIS OFFICER IS BEST SUITED. FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT, ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.

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